

Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)

Pre-Application Guide for 2010

The application process to obtain an FMPP grant takes energy and organization. The following questions can help you gather the information and resources you will need to complete the application and, ultimately, help you implement your project. In addition, these questions can also help you structure your proposal narrative—the cornerstone of your application and may improve your chance to convince the peer review team that your project should be funded.

Are you eligible to apply for an FMPP grant?

First, determine your eligibility. Under the FMPP, eligible entities include: 1) agricultural cooperative, 2) producer network, 3) producer association, 4) local government, 5) non-profit corporation, 6) public benefit corporation, 7) economic development corporation, 8) regional farmers market authority, or 9) Tribal Government.

Can you provide written proof of eligibility?

All applicants must submit written proof of eligibility from a State or Federal source to FMPP with their application package. A non-profit organization, for example, may include a copy of its incorporation paperwork from the State or the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), indicating 501 legal status.

Universities or local governments may need extra time to obtain the required paperwork, and should begin this effort early.

Does your project fall under one or more of FMPP's eligible uses?

The mission of the FMPP grant program is to assist eligible entities in promoting the domestic consumption of agricultural commodities by expanding direct producer-to-consumer marketing opportunities. Additionally, all projects should support agricultural marketing enterprises where farmers or vendors sell their own products directly to consumers.

FMPP grant funds cannot be used for: 1) the acquisition of land or the funding of construction, rehabilitation, or repair of a building or facility; 2) the development of or participation in political or lobbying activities; 3) any activities prohibited by 7 CFR parts 3015¹, 3016² and 3019³, including those unallowable costs listed in FMPP Guidelines; or 4) any activities currently funded or pending support by a Federal program, or public/private organization.

Can you explain how farmers and vendors will directly benefit from your project?

Peer reviewers will apply FMPP criteria to evaluate and score your project proposal. (These criteria are located in the FMPP Guidelines.) All applicants must explain how their project directly benefits farmers and vendors. This benefit may be realized through the farmer/vendor's financial gain, knowledge, or other substantial assistance. This element of your proposal is critical.

Can you demonstrate a "need" for the project work that your organization is proposing?

While applying the FMPP criteria, peer reviewers will place emphasis upon the "need for the project." Each applicant must be able to explain the need for their project work. Explain why it is necessary for your organization to: a) complete the identified project, b) answer the question raised by the problem(s) identified, and c) provide the solution or service.

How important is the issue or problem that you plan to solve? Is this the first time this project activity has been approached, or is there a history of this activity being done? What successes and failures have there been in the past?

Do your research; identify others that have addressed this issue or problem. If this is a new approach to the problem, provide information about organizations that have addressed the issue previously and succeeded or failed. Above all, explain why your organization is better suited to tackle the problem, perform the service, or complete the task than others who have tried. A strong FMPP narrative explains why your organization is THE organization to take on this proposal.

1 Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations

2 Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments

3 Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, Non-profit Organizations, and For-profit Organizations.

Can you measure, quantitatively or qualitatively, the success of your project? In other words, will you be able to identify “outputs and outcomes” as a direct result of your project activity?

Peer reviewers will also focus on these FMPP criteria to evaluate and score your proposal. “Quantitative Evaluation and Measurement of Project Impact” is one of many criteria in the FMPP Guidelines. Each applicant must be able to identify how they will measure the impact/success of their project work. Identify what the organization plans to achieve as a result of their project quantitatively (information in the form of numbers or statistics) or qualitatively (information that can be observed and described, but not measured with numbers).

The narrative **must** include the measurable outputs that will result from your project, such as number of jobs created, classes taught, meetings held, materials produced, program/customer participation rates and demography, or hours of each type of service provided. You must also identify measurable outcomes that will result from your project, such as changes in attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, skills, status, and level of functioning (performance/execution) that are expected to result from program activities.

If appropriate, do you have established relationships or collaborations with other relevant organizations to share resources and strengthen your proposal?

While not required, partnerships and collaborations can strengthen an FMPP application. Partnerships include work with farmers/vendors that you may be helping, the families that you serve and the community in which you operate, as well as other businesses in the area that are also directly marketing their goods and services to consumers. “Degree of Collaboration and Partnership Participation” is another of the criteria described in the FMPP Guidelines. Each applicant should be able to identify the participants that will be helping their project succeed.

Does your organization have the capacity to implement the project—that is, can you follow through with your project plans and demonstrate success?

Big ideas are great on paper, but success needs to be within your organization’s capability in order to obtain a grant. Therefore, your project goals and objectives must be realistic. An organization must be able to complete the project proposed in the timeline that YOU have identified.

Remember, your proposal will be reviewed by your peers. Peer reviewers recognize unrealistic activities, goals, and objectives. Provide enough information for reviewers to determine the capacity of your organization, along with realistic and attainable goals and objectives.

Before you prepare a budget, do you know what you need funding for and how you plan to use the funds? Can you prepare a written budget narrative that provides sound justification for each of your budget expenses?

Nothing stops a good proposal from being funded like a budget that does not match up with the proposal’s goals and objectives. Be sure you explain why the items being requested are appropriate and necessary for the project work and will assist in addressing the issues identified.

Are you and your staff ready to participate in the grant preparation process—can you or someone else prepare your written proposal narrative, supplemental budget summary, and all of the other required forms?

Grant applications require numerous documents to be completed, along with a narrative which includes a workplan, timeline, budget, and a means of evaluating and measuring results. Make sure you have the time and people to help you pull everything together as soon as the FMPP Notice of Funds Available (NOFA) is announced and well before the application due date.

Can you or the grant writer prepare the narrative in a logical and clear format that meets the FMPP requirements?

A clear and well-written proposal narrative describes in a convincing manner the circumstances, needs, and suggested solutions you identify for your particular situation. Specific details about qualitative and quantitative end results are very important. We encourage details!

Next Step:

Your next step, before you write your proposal, is to read the narrative instructions in the “FMPP Guidelines.” Clearly define what you want to do, how much it will cost, how you will succeed, and how you will measure progress. You should also understand the criteria that will be used to evaluate your proposal, and be sure to address each of the FMPP evaluation criteria in your narrative.



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